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# The Invisible Project - Making Visual Stories of Homelessness

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THE INVISIBLE PROJECT  
MAKING VISUAL STORIES OF HOMELESSNESS

PRESENTED BY: ROBERT LEE JR

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL  
GRADUATE DIGITAL MEDIA  
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## THE INVISIBLE PROJECT

The Invisible Project for me started in Professor Yeohyun Ahn's Fall 2015 Graduate Graphic Design class. In the grander scheme The Invisible Project is a partnership with The Welcome Project at Valparaiso University, Housing Opportunities, Day Spring Women's Shelter, Gabriel's Horn, and the Porter County Museum. The project is focused on bringing the homelessness problem in Porter County into visibility. At any given time, there are approximately 160 individuals in Porter County who don't have a home to go to at night. Many of these are women and children but a few are also men. The Invisible Project tells their personal stories through video, photography, and even through their own handwriting.

Professor Ahn assigned The Invisible Project as the final project for our class. We were asked to produce some sort of graphic design solution focused on bringing attention to this homelessness problem that we were being introduced to. Professor Ahn regularly had individuals come to the class and make presentations about what they do and how they try to help the problem. Some of these people were representatives from Day Spring Women's Shelter, Housing Opportunities, and Gabriel's Horn. We were also provided photography from Professor's Aimee Tomeseck and Liz Wuerffel of the Art Department.

The Graduate Graphic Design and Digital Publishing class is currently structured as a beginning class for individuals in the Digital Media program who haven't really had any exposure to graphic design. Having three associate degrees in Visual Communication and a bachelor's degree in Media Design focused on graphic design Professor Ahn thought it best to flex the curriculum to better suit my educational needs. Rather than being a class that focused

on beginning graphic design she assigned the final project to me in September and challenged me to produce the branding pieces for the class project and to also develop the concept farther. This lead more to the class becoming about Brand Identity, Art Direction and Curatorship. All of which I had no education in.

Immediately I delved into creating a brand identity for the project. I chose a traditional serified typeface with then connectors and wide strokes. It was at this point I realized that these people were missing a piece of their lives but were still recognizable as people. So taking the font I started erasing pieces of the thin parts of the words. You can see above that you can recognize the word on cover page but parts of it are missing.

I decided that this needed a hand made feel because the individuals being showcased were trying to rebuild their lives and anything less than homemade wouldn't portray the message I needed to convey. I chose a historic printing process called Cyanotype. This is where the term blueprint was coined. You take two chemicals and when combined they become sensitive to UV light. Brushed on paper and left to dry creates a photo paper. When exposed to the sun under a negative the UV light burns the chemical on the white spaces of the image. The print is then washed with water and a small amount of hydrogen peroxide which creates a chemical reaction and leaves a blue image on the paper.

Beginning in the Spring 2016 semester for my Graduate Web Design Professor Ahn assigned a long term project for me to complete considering I already had previous experience in web design. I was tasked in creating an interactive, experimental website to display the student final projects produced in the Fall 2015 Graphic Design & Digital Publishing for the Invisible Project.

To begin the project, I decided that this site needed to be both a content managed website so that it could be both a functioning website but also an interface for designated users to add new content to the site. I also needed the site to look different than anything that I had done before. I chose to use a content managed framework designed specifically for showcasing photography and graphic designed called Koken. I chose a framework called Boulevard which allowed the frontpage of the website to scroll horizontally as opposed to the standard portrait based website. Each student had one image displayed on the homepage that linked to their own individual gallery.

Through this process I produced over 15 images of people and handwritten stories which were then combined into a hardbound published book. Also produced were prints to be exhibited in an art exhibit and a website showcasing the entire class's work for the project.